



NORTHEAST IDAHO

BONNEVILLE, BUTTE, CLARK, CUSTER, FREMONT, JEFFERSON, LEMHI, MADISON, & TETON COUNTIES

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

The March seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate for the Bonneville Labor Market Area (LMA) decreased one-tenth of a percentage point over the month to 3.4 percent as seen in Northeast Table 1. Of the four counties in the LMA, all showed slight decreases with the exception of Bingham County, which remained unchanged. Year-over-year, the LMA's unemployment rate decreased two-tenths of a percentage point with Bingham, Bonneville, and Jefferson Counties all contributing; Butte County increased slightly. Idaho Falls, the largest city in the LMA, remained unchanged at 3.3 percent from February to March, but decreased two-tenths of a percentage point year-over-year. The LMA's rate in March was 1.3 percentage points lower than the state's rate of 4.6 percent and 2.3 percentage points lower than the national rate of 5.7 percent.

The other six counties in Northeast Idaho all experienced decreases in their unemployment rates over the month with the exception of Clark County, which remained unchanged. Year-over-year, Fremont, Lemhi, Madison, and Teton Counties all experienced decreases in their unemployment rates while Clark and Custer Counties experienced increases. Clark County showed the largest rate change, increasing 1.9 percentage points from March 2003. Current rates in these six counties range from 1.5 percent in Madison County to 7.3 percent in Custer County.

Nonfarm Payroll Jobs increased by 680 over the month to 64,650. The *Construction* industry was the largest contributor, adding 210 jobs. *Trade, Transportation, & Utilities* added almost 200 jobs, with *Retail Trade* and *Wholesale Trade* contributing equally with 80 jobs each. All other industrial sectors showed increases, each adding less than 100 with the exception of *Other Service*, which showed a very minimal loss. Year-over-year, *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* increased by 1,580. *Construction* added 460 jobs while *Educational &*

Northeast Idaho Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Bonneville, Bingham, Butte, and Jefferson Counties

	March 2004*	Feb 2004	March 2003	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	86,040	85,560	83,660	0.6	2.8
Unemployment	2,910	2,960	3,010	-1.7	-3.3
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.4	3.5	3.6		
Total Employment	83,140	82,600	80,660	0.7	3.1
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	84,170	83,540	81,650	0.8	3.1
Unemployment	3,330	3,710	3,340	-10.2	-0.3
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.0	4.4	4.1		
Total Employment	80,840	79,830	78,310	1.3	3.2
JOB BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	64,650	63,970	63,070	1.1	2.5
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>	9,350	9,090	9,400	2.9	-0.5
Natural Resources & Mining	60	50	60	20.0	0.0
Construction	4,510	4,300	4,050	4.9	11.4
Manufacturing	4,780	4,740	5,290	0.8	-9.6
Food Manufacturing	2,750	2,750	3,020	0.0	-8.9
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	250	240	240	4.2	4.2
Machinery Manufacturing	420	410	430	2.4	-2.3
Other Manufacturing	1,360	1,340	1,600	1.5	-15.0
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	55,300	54,880	53,670	0.8	3.0
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	15,340	15,150	14,810	1.3	3.6
Wholesale Trade	5,290	5,210	5,060	1.5	4.5
Retail Trade	8,200	8,120	7,970	1.0	2.9
Utilities	120	120	110	0.0	9.1
Transportation	1,730	1,700	1,670	1.8	3.6
Information	920	910	940	1.1	-2.1
Financial Activities	2,180	2,180	2,100	0.0	3.8
Professional & Business Services	11,770	11,700	11,430	0.6	3.0
Educational & Health Services	6,720	6,690	6,270	0.4	7.2
Leisure & Hospitality	5,050	4,990	4,830	1.2	4.6
Other Services	2,000	2,010	2,280	-0.5	-12.3
Government Education	5,140	5,120	5,180	0.4	-0.8
Government Administration	6,180	6,130	5,830	0.8	6.0

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

Health Services added 450 jobs. The *Trade* industries, *Professional & Business Services*, *Leisure & Hospitality*, and *Government Administration* individually showed increases of between 200 and 350 jobs. *Manufacturing* showed a loss of 510 jobs, almost equally between the *Food Manufacturing* and *Other Manufacturing* sectors. This is a slower time for some manufacturing businesses where temporary layoffs for maintenance can likely occur.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Bonneville County

- SkyWest Airlines, a partner carrier of Delta Air Lines, restored its 10:30 p.m. flight from Salt Lake City to Idaho Falls after dropping it in January. Demands mostly from business travelers showed the necessity for

bringing the night flight back. The flight seats 30 passengers, adding up to a capability of 840 seats over a month's time. The Idaho Falls Regional airport has been busier than usual in the first quarter of 2004, so bringing back the flight will be a plus for the summer months when the airport sees even heavier traffic.

- Littletree Inn, at the corner of Holmes Avenue and Elva Street in Idaho Falls, is now known as the Best Value Pinecrest Inn, part of Best Value Inns of Coral Springs, Florida. Best Values is a co-op that allows small, independent properties to have the buying power and marketing resources that a big chain might have. Other than the new name and new affiliation, the Inn should remain the same.
- Mama Inez restaurant recently moved from Park Avenue of downtown Idaho Falls to Ammon Town Square between Sally Beauty Supply and Hollywood Video on the corner of Hitt Road and Seventeenth Street. Although the previous location was doing well and residents again rated it as one of the city's top 10 restaurants, the owner wanted to move to a more convenient location for its customers.
- Merry Maids, a worldwide franchise of home cleaners, opened an outlet in Idaho Falls in April. The company provides all of its own equipment, cleaning products, and supplies, and offers an initial free in-home assessment based on size of house, frequency of visits, and amount of cleaning desired. The business can be reached at 529-2329.
- Mount Vernon Assisted Living Center recently opened in Idaho Falls at 3620 Potomac Way. The 15-bed facility includes large, private rooms with personal showers and kitchenettes; a fireplace and spacious dining area; a salon; laundry facility; and a fenced back patio. Monthly assessments by a registered nurse, games, and activities are also included. The center accepts people at resident levels of care 1, 2, and 3 and is Alzheimer's secure.
- Construction began in June for the remodel of the Grand Teton Mall at 2300 East Seventeenth Street in Idaho Falls. The mall was built in 1984. The work is expected to last until November of this year. As a result, the interior of the mall will soon have a new color scheme, new flooring, new light fixtures, family room-style seating (leather sofas and chairs) with tables, new planters, new signage, and removal of skylight trusses. The outside will get new paint and new lighting at the entrances. A second phase of the project will include an enlarged family restroom and a soft play area for small children.

Other Counties

- The Rigby Recreation Center, a city-managed enterprise for the past three years in Jefferson County, is also getting a facelift. The \$100,000 expansion will give the center ample room for dances, and instruction in karate, yoga, and aerobics. It already has weight and exercise equipment. Volunteer labor helps keep the budget low, and the project should be completed by the end of summer.
- Salmon opened its Sacajawea Interpretive, Cultural, and Education Center for its first full season on May 1. Although several projects are still in the works for the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial starting in 2005, the center is a beautiful work-in-progress with plenty to see. The 71-acre ranch has been transformed to already include a large bronze sculpture of Sacajawea with baby Jean-Baptiste; a mile trail with tepees; signage and a fish weir (used to catch salmon); an interpretive center with exhibits; a gift shop run by Ponderosa Gallery; and beautiful landscaping throughout. The Meriwether Theater, a converted barn with antique theater seats, will soon be put to use for lectures, concerts, and plays. The Community Heritage Garden will soon be in bloom with flowers, organically grown vegetables, a pioneer garden, and a xeriscape exhibit. The dictionary shows that xeriscape is "a trademark used for a landscaping method that employs drought-resistant plants in an effort to conserve resources, especially water." The Lewis & Clark research library is constantly adding to its collection of photos, documents, video documentaries and books. Still to come are the Cultural and Performing Arts Center to house the Native American Cultural Institute, a performing arts theater, a cultural heritage exhibit area and a location for educational programs. The School of Discovery will accommodate grades K through 8 with a lab to experience interactive history, culture, land management and natural sciences. The nature trail will expand to include a path along the Lemhi River, additional interpretive displays and exhibits, and trail art. Angie Hurley was recently named as the new director. Gary Van Huffel, the director from the center's onset, has taken a position with the City of Salmon as grant administrator and project manager.

Tanya Albán, Regional Labor Economist
 150 Shoup Avenue, Idaho Falls, ID 83402
 (208) 557-2500, ext. 3587
 E-mail: talban@jobservice.us